

## BACTERIAL BLIGHT OF SYNGONIUM PODOPHYLLUM CAUSED BY A PATHOVAR OF XANTHOMONAS CAMPESTRIS

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Syngonium podophyllum Schott is a member of the popular foliage plant family Araceae, and occurs naturally from Mexico to Costa Rica (4). 'White Butterfly' is the most widely grown cultivar of syngonium for the potted plant market (1). In 1982, a serious blight disease was found on this cultivar (2), and as much as one-third of a production crop can be affected (3). Most cultivars, such as 'Cream', 'Green Gold', and many others can also be affected (2,3).

**SYMPTOMS:** Watersoaking of interveinal tissue is the first symptom. This may show during the early morning hours and then disappear as the day progresses. This occurs for up to 10 days in the same portion of the leaf before chlorosis and necrosis develop. These latter symptoms develop rapidly once initiated and as much as 50% of the foliage area can be affected within 2 days (2). As watersoaking spreads, older affected tissues become light brown, dark brown, and eventually turn dry and papery. When the spread of lesions subsides, a yellow border often develops between the necrotic and surrounding tissue. Finally, nonaffected areas become pale yellow and dry, and the entire leaf shrivels (Fig. 1). The dried petiole and leaf remain attached to the stem until disturbed or intentionally removed (3).



**Figure 1.** A pathovar of Xanthomonas campestris on Syngonium podophyllum showing watersoaked leaf panels and death of leaves.

**CONTROL:** Since this disease is systemic in nature, chemical control has not been successful. Control should be based on exclusion of the pathogen from the tissue-culture stock through adequate indexing and exclusion of the pathogen from the production area through diligent and educated scouting and destruction of infected plants (2). Also, severity of Xanthomonas blight of S. podophyllum 'White Butterfly' can be minimized with moderate increases of complete fertilizer, nitrogen, or potassium while still maintaining good plant growth (1).

**SURVEY AND DETECTION:** Look for watersoaked paneling in the leaves which may disappear in the afternoon, followed later by dry papery necrosis and leaf death.

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### **LITERATURE CITED**

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